



University of Iowa Health Care

*Pediatric Cardiology*

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Dear Primary Care Provider,

Childhood obesity is a serious medical condition representing the most common chronic illness in childhood. Prevalence rates in the United States have quadrupled since 1970, representing an urgent pediatric issue. Current reports estimate as many as 15% of children and adolescents are overweight and an additional 17% are obese.

This dramatic increase in childhood obesity has led to an emergence of secondary diseases, including dyslipidemia, hypertension, type 2 diabetes, the metabolic syndrome, sleep apnea, fatty liver disease, degenerative joint disease, and mental health disorders, including the stigma associated with obesity. More importantly, childhood obesity predicts adult obesity and adult obesity-related disease, making effective prevention and treatment important at the pediatric level.

The primary care setting plays an important role in the identification, management, and prevention of inappropriate weight gain or the onset of obesity-related diseases. Identification of these children and subsequent communication of their weight status to their family are initial and crucial steps for care. The attached algorithm was designed to aid in the diagnosis of obesity related conditions following determination of pediatric weight status. This algorithm was intended for use at all patient visits, including well-child examinations, for children over the 2 years of age. The attached blood pressure tables include cut-off values for pre-hypertension and hypertension. The algorithm and tables are color-coded for convenience.

I hope this decision tree becomes a useful entity for you and assists in your care of pediatric patients. If there are questions or concerns regarding the screening tool or if you need assistance with referrals, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonali Patel MD, PhD".

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